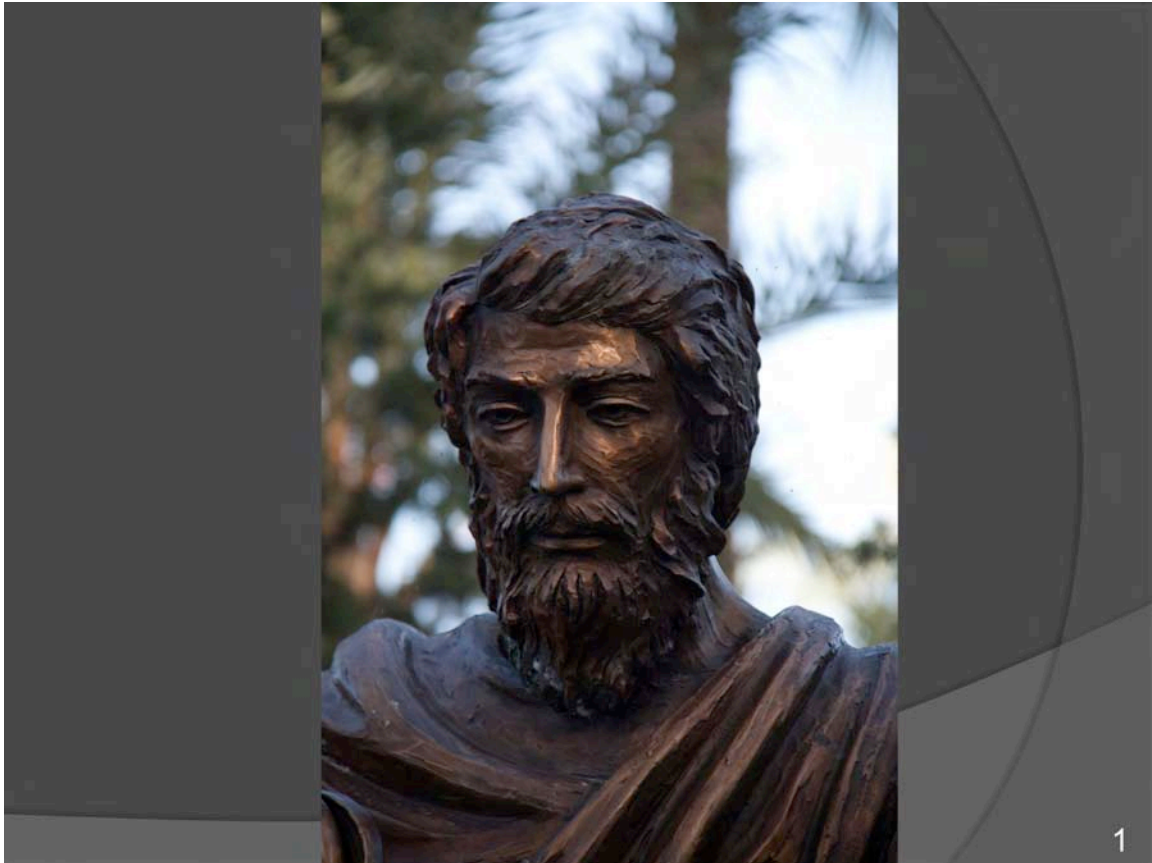
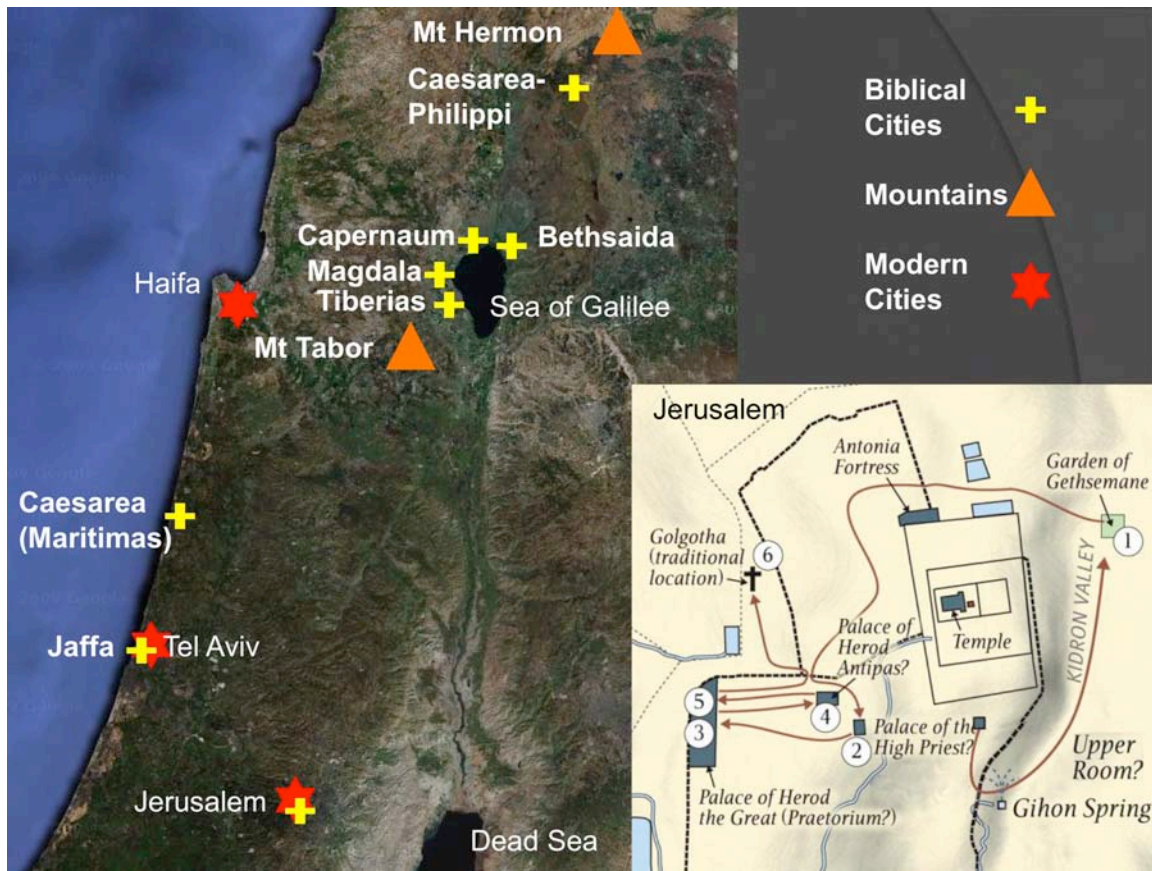


Good evening!

We've all heard the various Biblical accounts of Christ's life and the role that the disciples played in those events. Often there are no specifics of which disciples participated. In many we can assume that most, if not all were present. In some of these accounts there are details with names and places.



This evening I'll share with you some sights and insights that we experienced during our Holy land travels with a focus on one person, the Apostle Peter, or Simon, Son of Jonah.



This map shows where the events I'll share occurred. Much of Christ's ministry took place on and around the Sea of Galilee (also described as the Sea of Tiberias, the Lake of Gennesaret or the Lake of Kinnereth).

John describes Peter as being from Bethsaida on the northern shore of the lake. Beyond this, the first we know of Peter is when he is called to be a disciple.



This is a view from the sea looking toward the town of Magdala (home of Mary Magdalene). Capernaum and Bethsaida are further to the right.

Luke describes Peter's calling this way.

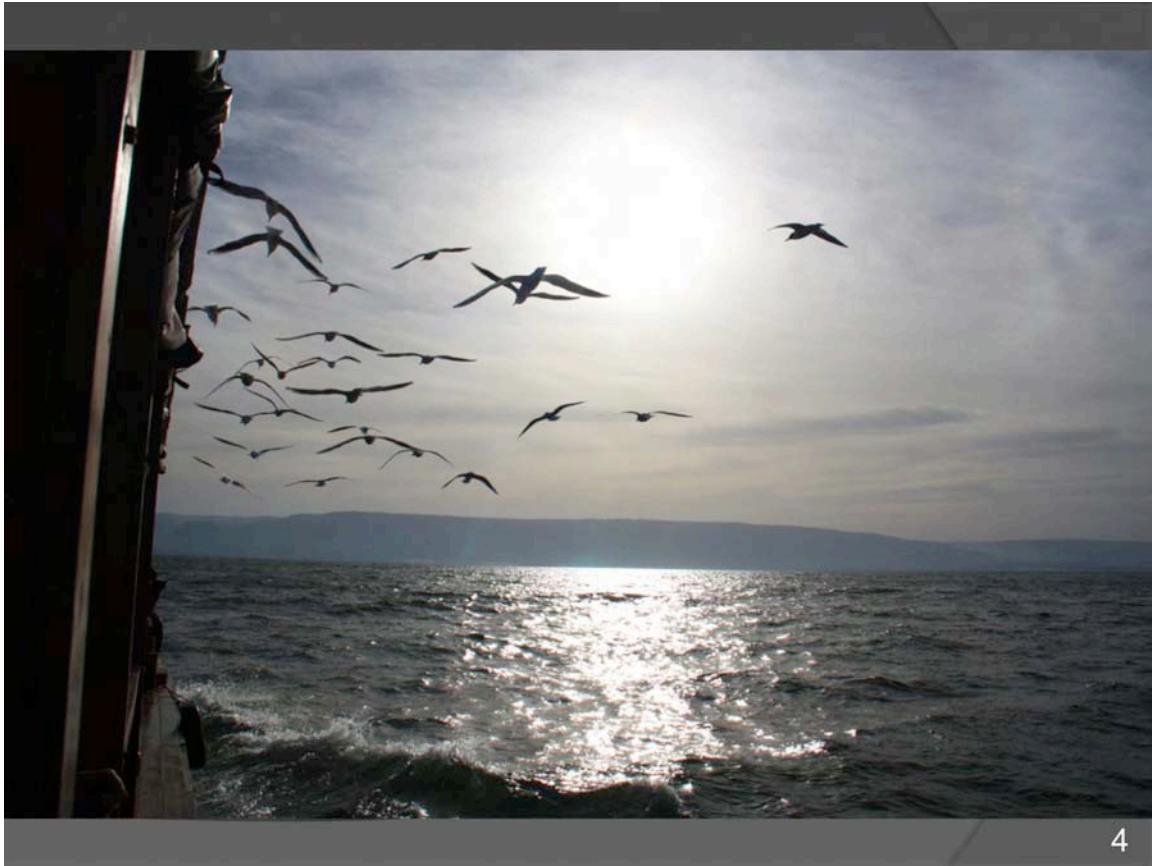
Peter's Calling

Luke 5:1-11

1One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, 2he saw at the water's edge two boats, 3He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

4When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

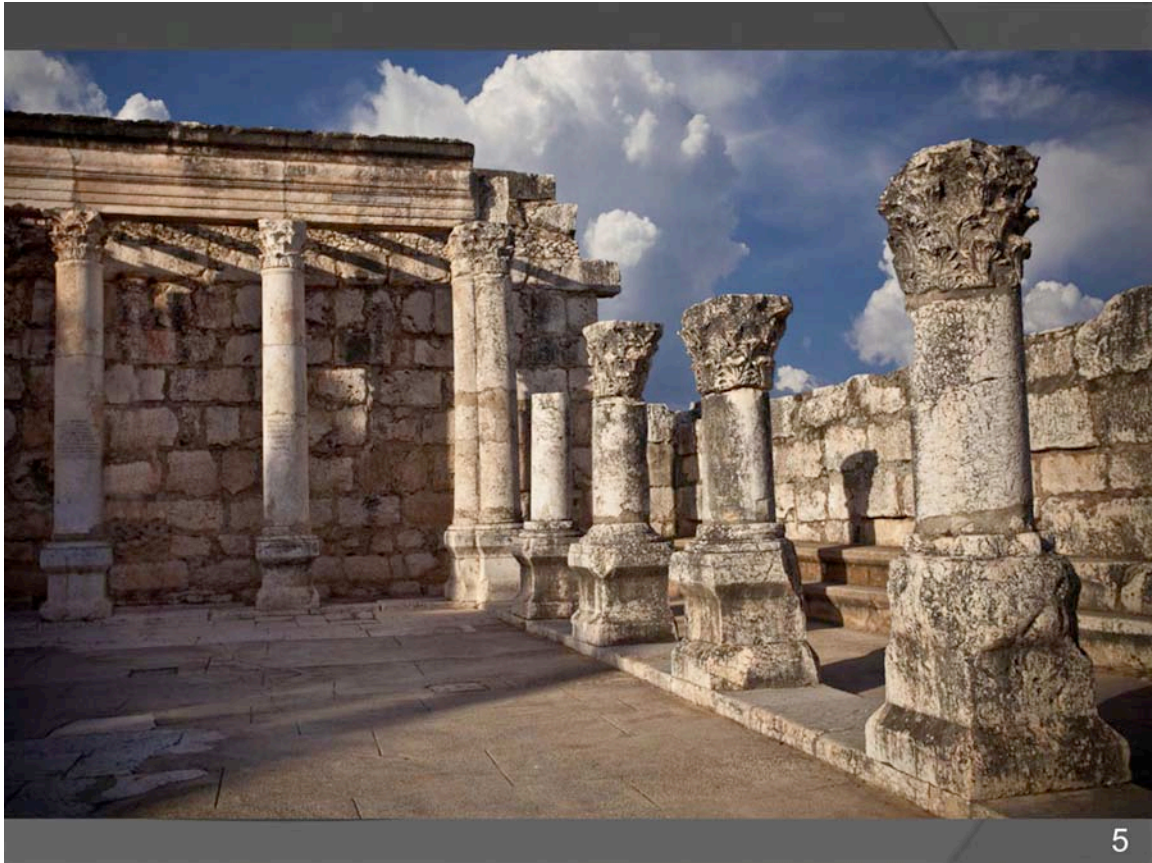
5Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."



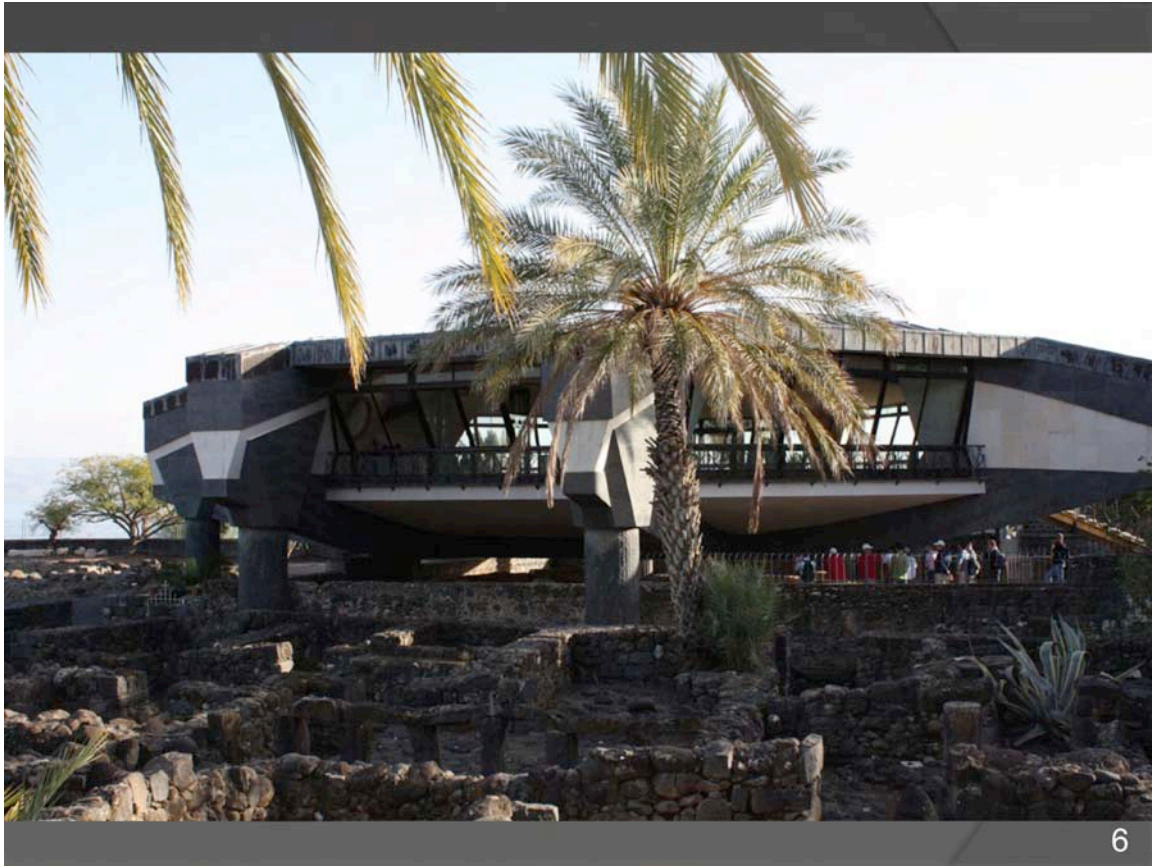
6When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 7So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

8When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." 11So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.



The town of Capernaum features prominently in the Biblical accounts and is described as Christ's home town after he left Nazareth. This is the ruin of the 4th century synagogue of Capernaum. It is built on the foundation of the 1st century structure. The walls and doors are aligned with that older structure. Christ walked and taught in this space.



Nearby is the modern church built over the archeological remains of what is said to be the house of Peter's mother-in-law.

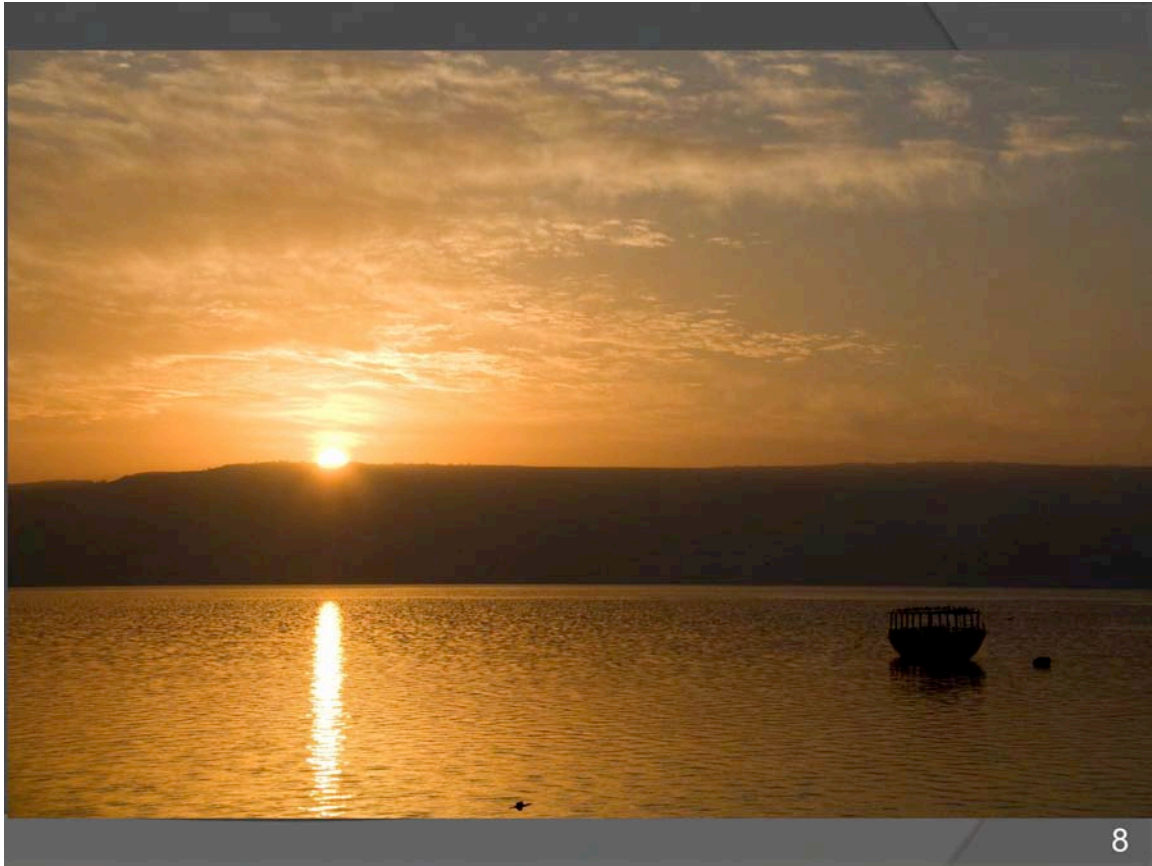


Luke describes the events of one visit to Capernaum this way.

Peter's Mother-in-law Healed

Luke 4:38-41 (New International Version)

38 Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. 39 So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.



Of course, one of the most prominent events was when Jesus walked on water to the boat the disciples were in. During our time on the water we had no volunteers to provide a demonstration (even among the pastors present). But this is how Matthew describes it.

Walking on Water

Matthew 14:22-33 (New International Version)

22Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side [toward Bethsaida], while he dismissed the crowd. 23After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25During the fourth watch of the night [that is, about dawn] Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

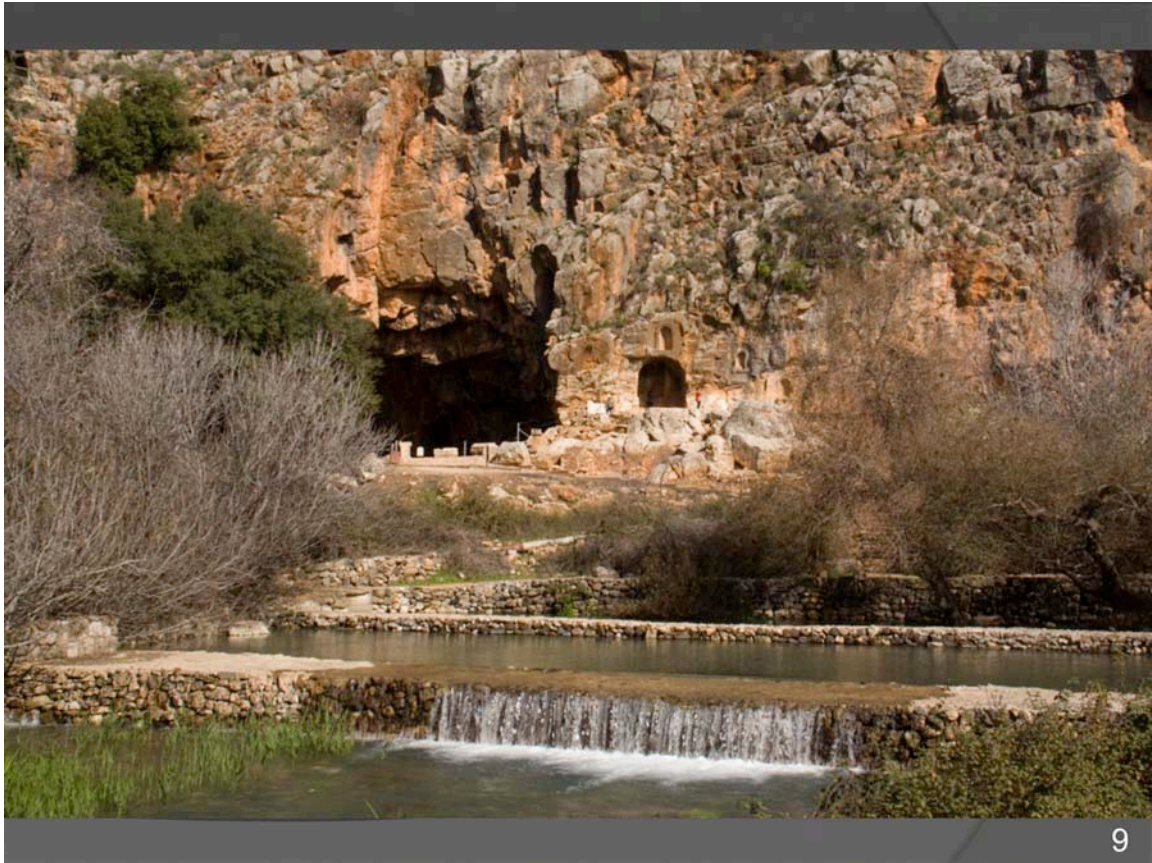
27But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

28"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

29"Come," he said.

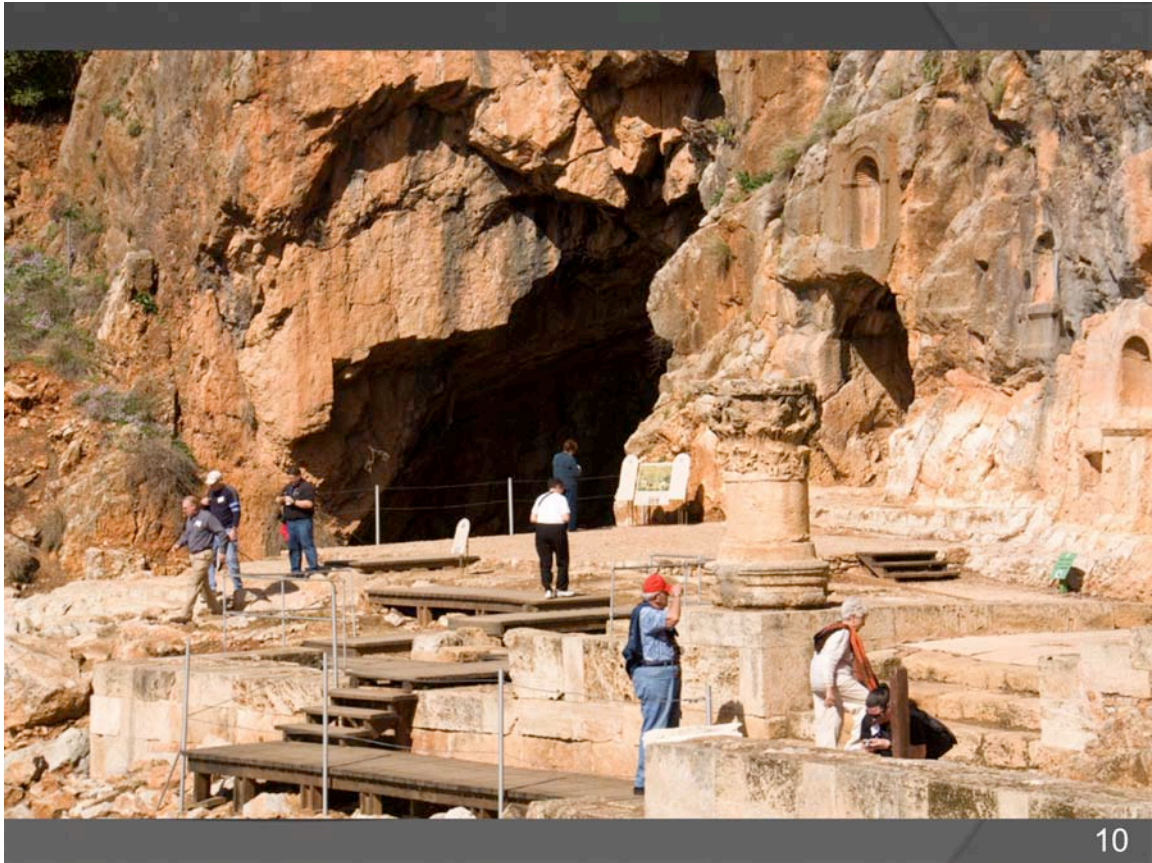
Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.
30But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"



This is the region of Caesarea Philippi about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. Last week Eric Wulfsberg gave an overview of the pagan significance of the place.

To the pagan mind, the cave and spring water at Caesarea Philippi created a gate to the underworld. They believed that their city was literally at the gates of hell.



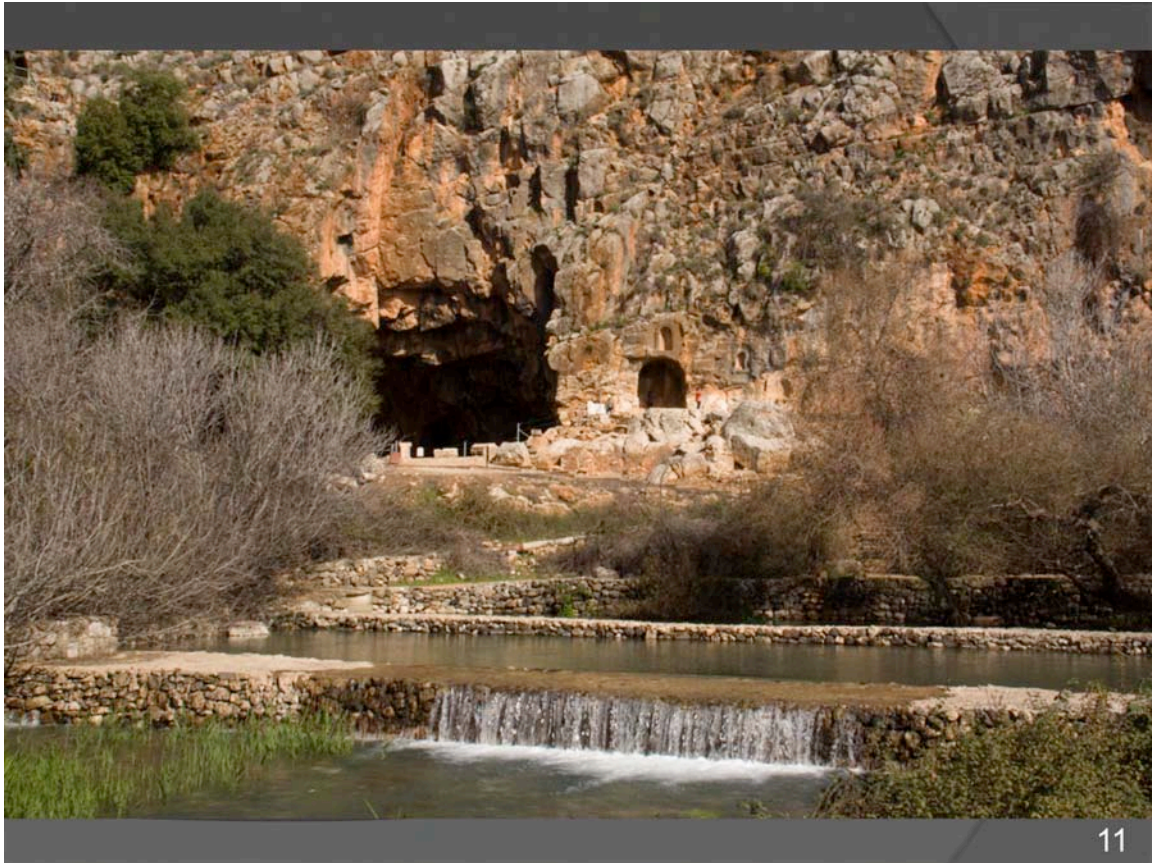
When Jesus brought his disciples to the area, they must have been shocked. Caesarea Philippi was like a red-light district in their world and devout Jews would have avoided any contact with the despicable acts committed there.

But Jesus had a different purpose as described by Matthew.

As discussed last week, standing near the pagan temples of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples 'Who do you say that I am?' Peter boldly replied, 'You are the Son of the living God.'

Jesus continued, '...I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.....'

Often we think of this passage as a declaration of protection from the power of evil for the church and its members. But gates were defensive structures in the ancient world, not offensive weapons. By saying that the gates of hell would not prevail, Jesus was suggesting that those gates were to be attacked.

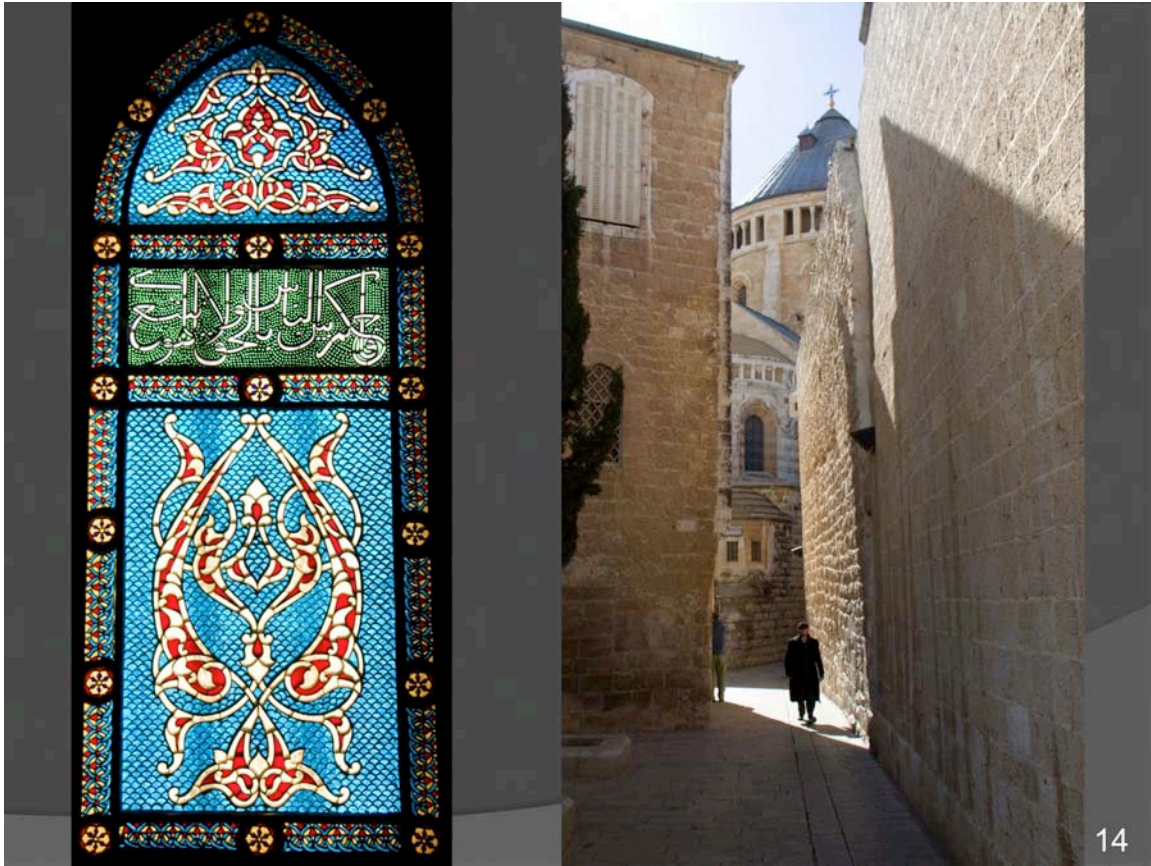


Standing as they were at a literal 'gate of Hell,' Peter and the other disciples were now being commissioned to a huge task: to attack evil, and to build the church in the very places that were most filled with moral corruption.

Jesus presents us a challenge with his words at Caesarea Philippi. He doesn't want his followers hiding from evil: He wants us emboldened and empowered to storm the gates of hell.

....

Let us then move on to the events of Jesus' last week in Jerusalem. Luke describes the preparation for Passover this way.



The Last Supper

Luke 22:7-20 (New International Version)

8 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

9 "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked.

10 He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, 11 and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 12 He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there."

13 They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.



In addition to instituting communion, Christ also gave a significant demonstration of servant hood in the Upper Room.

This is John's description.

John 13:1-38 (New International Version)

3Jesus ... got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5After that, he ... began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel

6He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

9"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean...."

....

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

31 [Later] When [Judas] was gone, Jesus said, ... 'Where I am going you cannot come....'

36 Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

37 Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

38 Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"



16

From the Upper Room Jesus and the Disciples walked through the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane. In this picture the Temple Mount is on the top-right with Gethsemane to the left.



The olive trees seen here have been tested and shown to be more than 2000 years old so they would have been in the garden at Christ's time.

Mark describes the events in the garden this way.

Gethsemane

Mark 14:32-42 (New International Version)

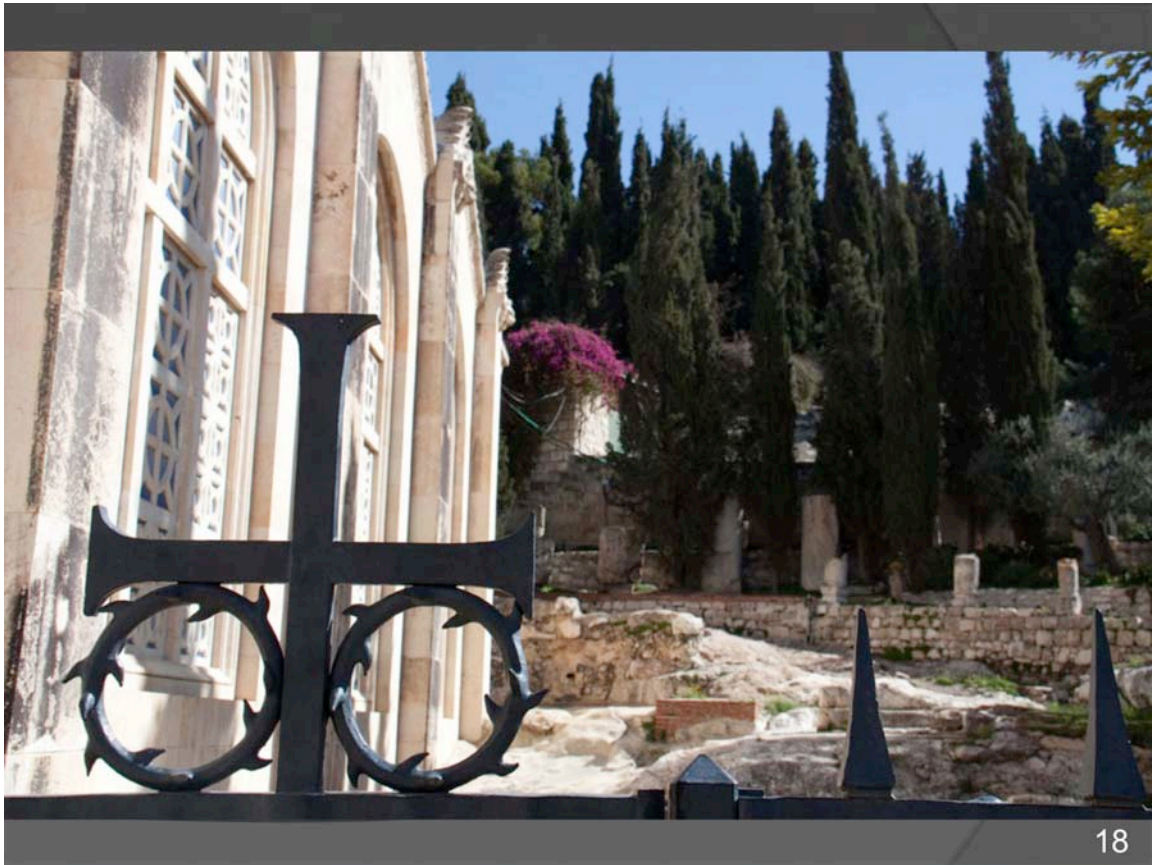
32They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, ... 34"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

35Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ...

37Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? ...

39Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. 40When he came back, he again found them sleeping,

41Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. ... 42Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"



Continuing with the account from John we hear:

Arrest and Trial

John 18:2-19:16 (New International Version)

3So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

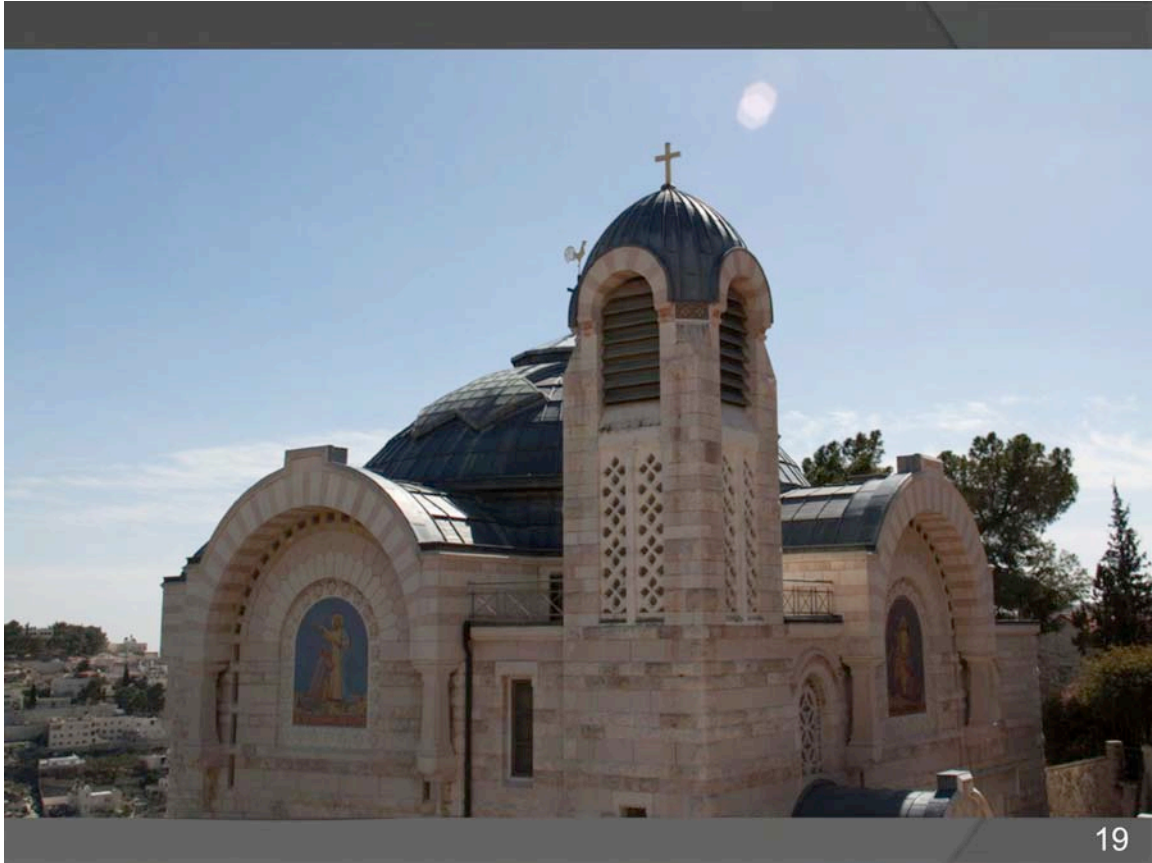
4Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?"

... And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

8...Jesus answered. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go."

10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear....

11 Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"



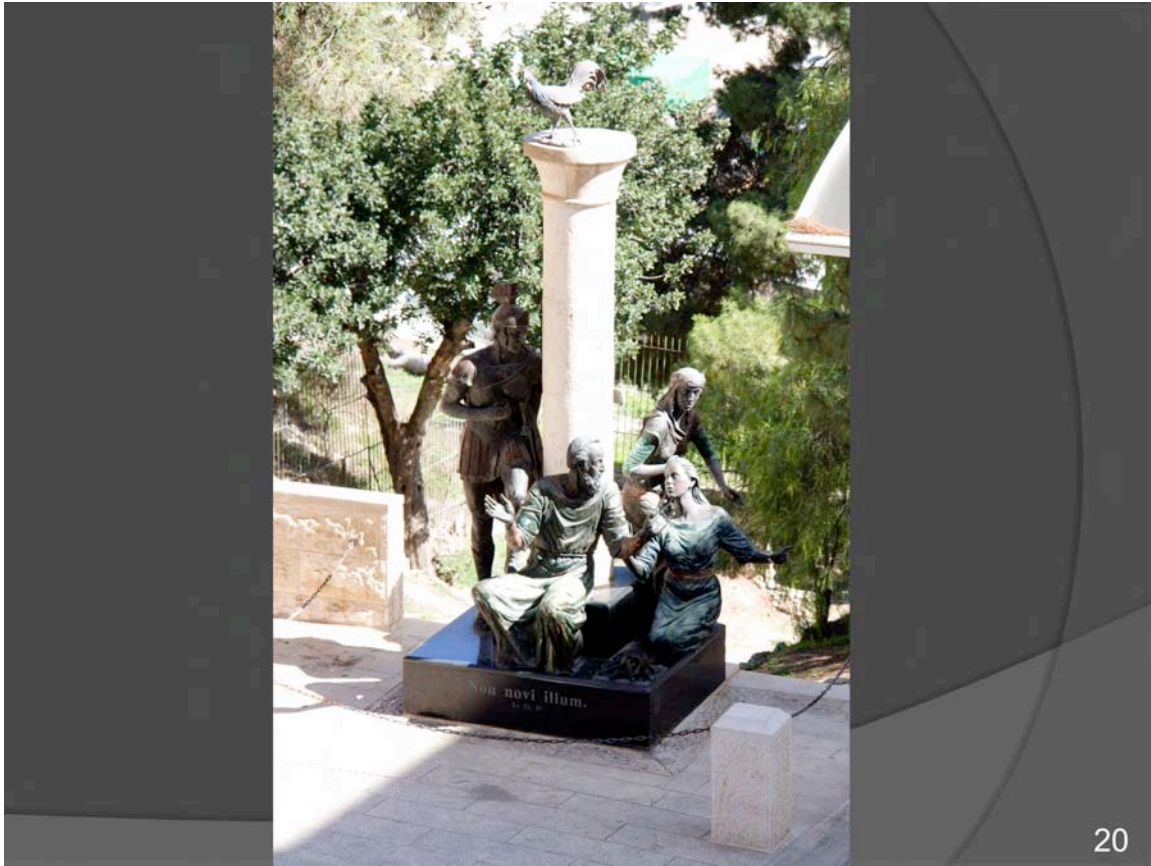
This is the church of St Peter in Gallicantu (meaning 'Cock Crow'). Located over what is believed to be the remains of the house of the High Priest Caiaphas. It is the location where Jesus was initially beaten and imprisoned and where Peter denied Christ.

John's narrative continues:

12 Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and took him ... to Annas and Caiaphas, ...

Peter's First Denial

15 Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because [the other] disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, 16 but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, came back, spoke to the girl on duty there and brought Peter in.



20

17 "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" the girl at the door asked Peter.

He replied, "I am not."

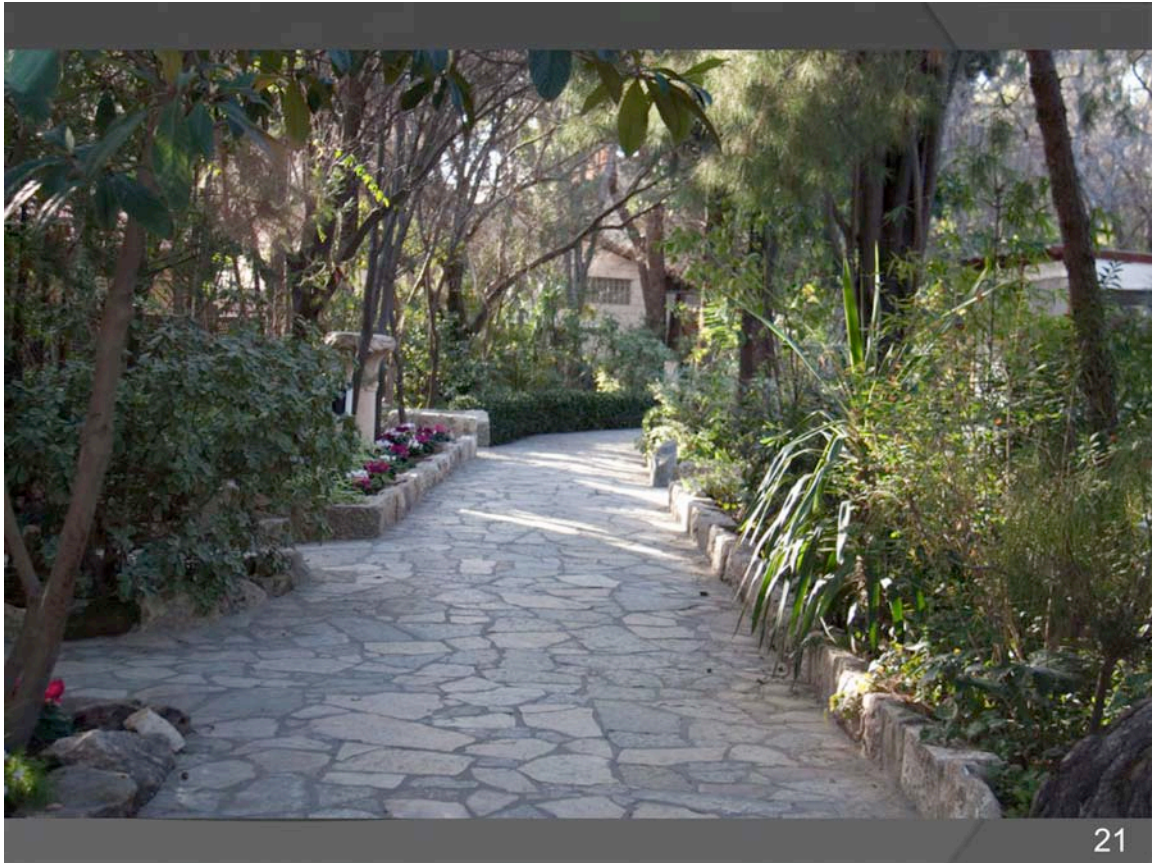
18 It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm.

....

25 As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "I am not."

26 One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove?" 27 Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.



Let us move on to Sunday morning. These pictures are of the 'Garden Tomb' area outside the current walls of Jerusalem.

John, who in his own writing often referred to himself as 'the other disciple' or 'the one Jesus loved,' recounts the events of the morning this way.

The Tomb and Resurrection

John 20:1-10 (New International Version)

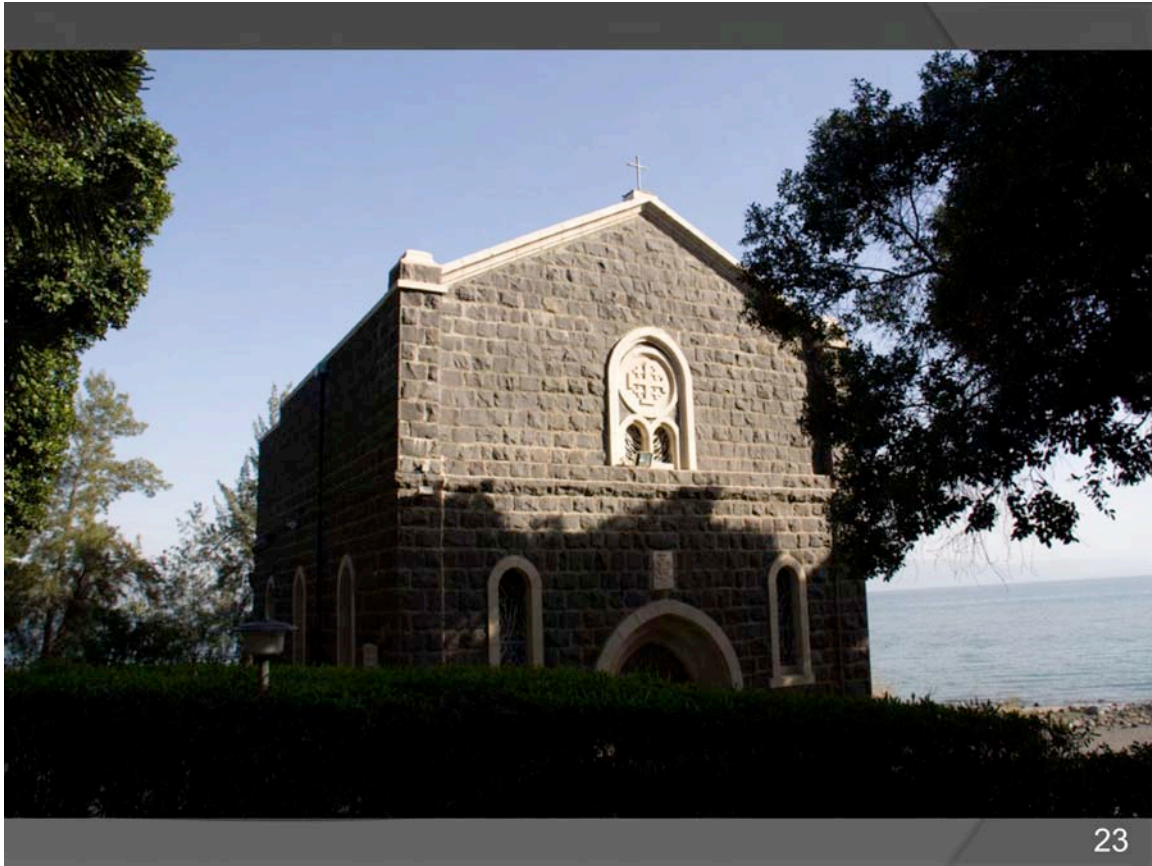
1Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"



22

3So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen.

Matthew adds that an angel told the women to inform the disciples that Jesus was going ahead of them to Galilee and that he would see them there.



These pictures are of the Church of the Primacy of Peter on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, or Tiberias. 'Primacy' refers to Christ's restoration of Peter as the Rock upon which the church would be built even after Peter's denial. The altar is over the stone considered to be the place that Christ prepared the breakfast meal.

John continues the account this way:

Breakfast at the Sea of Galilee

John 21:1-25 (New International Version)

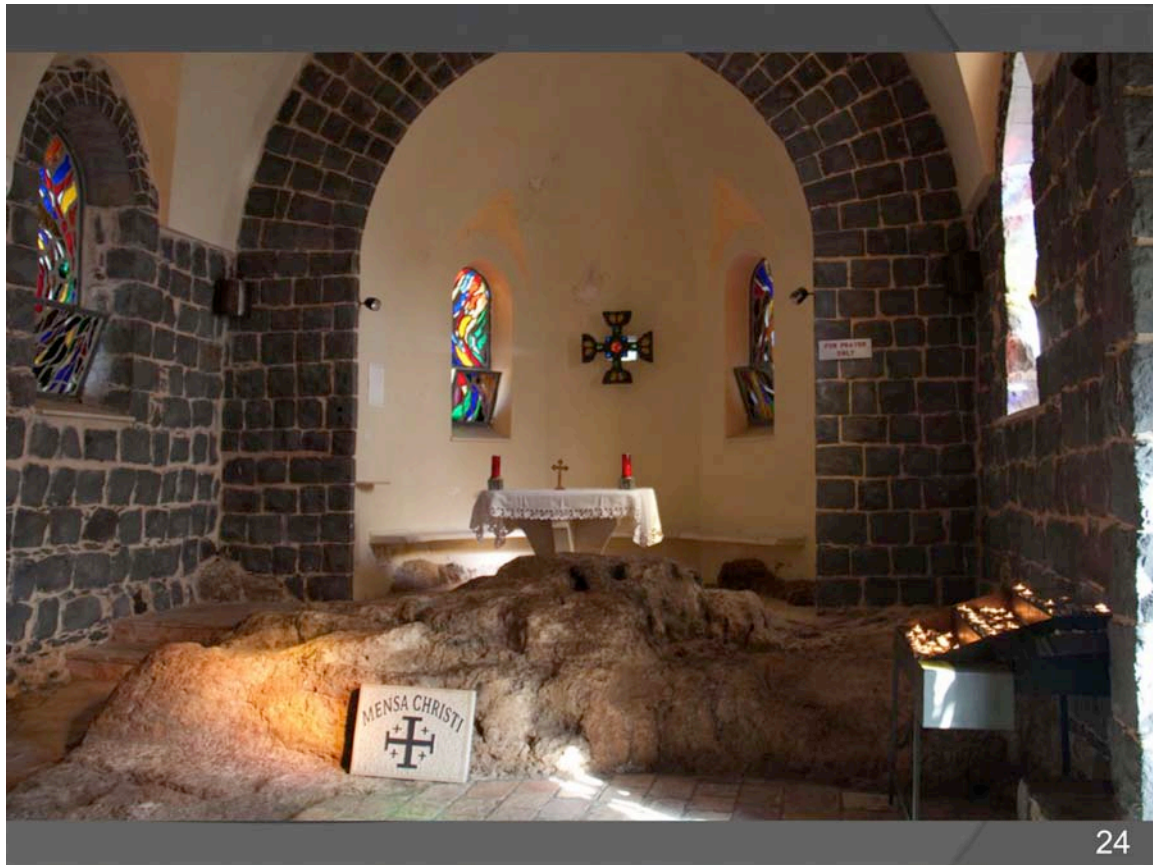
1Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way: 2Simon Peter, Thomas..., Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

5He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"

"No," they answered.

6He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."
When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.



24

... 9When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

....

15When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

16Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.

....



25

After Pentecost the establishment of the church began. This picture is looking from Gethsemane toward the Temple Mount. In the center is the 'Beautiful Gate' opening on the Kidron Valley.

Let us hear from Acts regarding some of the events of the new church.

Peter Heals at the Temple

Acts 3 (New International Version)

1One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 2Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going

into the temple courts. 3When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" 5So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

6Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." 7Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. 8He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.



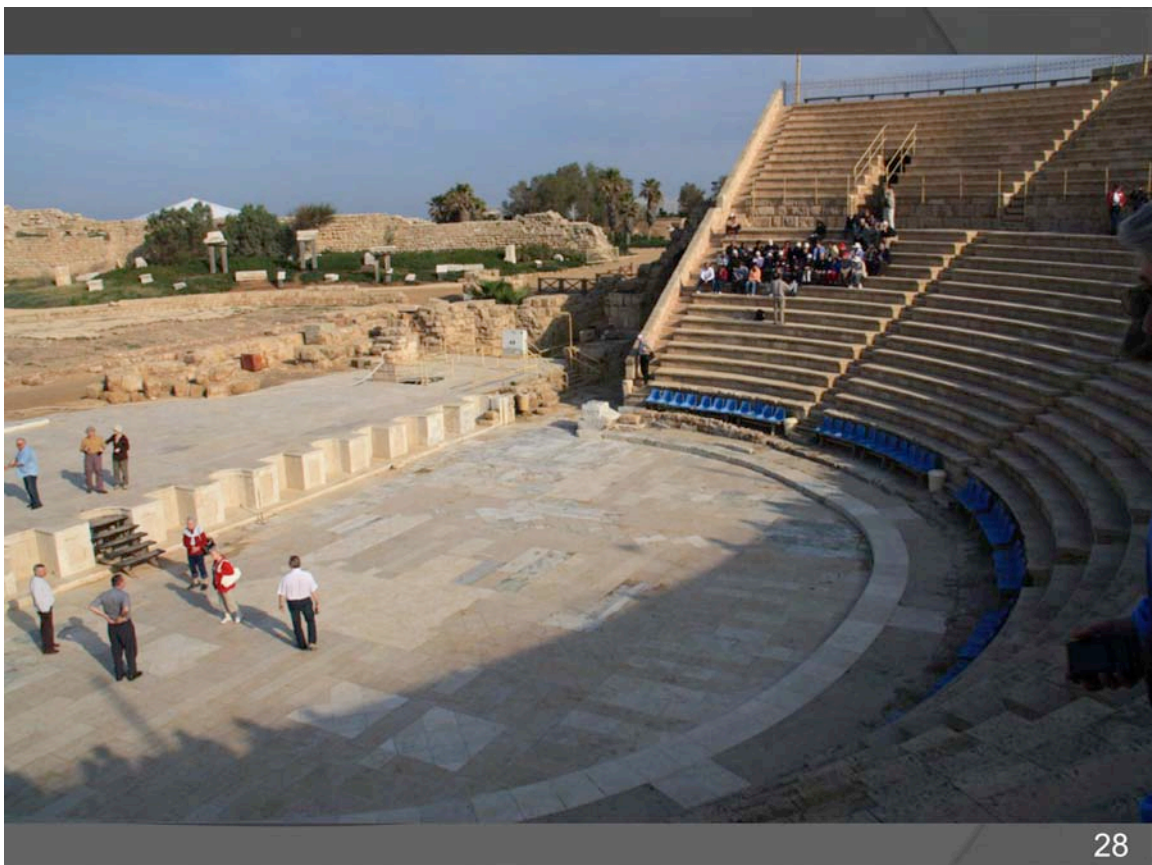
26

Acts 4 Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin

1The priests and the captain of the temple guard ... were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. ...

5[Then]they ... had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them....

8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11[Jesus] is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone
...



28

Caesarea was an important Roman city on the shores of the Mediterranean and the headquarters of the Roman government. Whenever the Bible refers to just 'Caesarea' this is the town that is meant, as contrasted with Caesarea-Philippi.

Acts describes the start of Peter's ministry to the Gentiles.

Cornelius Calls for Peter

1At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. 2He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; 3One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision [of] an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

4Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.

The angel answered, send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. 6He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."

7When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier 8He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

...

9About noon the following day as [the messengers] were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ... 11[In a vision] he saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. 13Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

14"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

15The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

16This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

...

19While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. 20So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

21Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

22The men [described Cornelius and their reason for coming.]



29

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. 24The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.

27... Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. 28He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.

....

34... "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. 36You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all....

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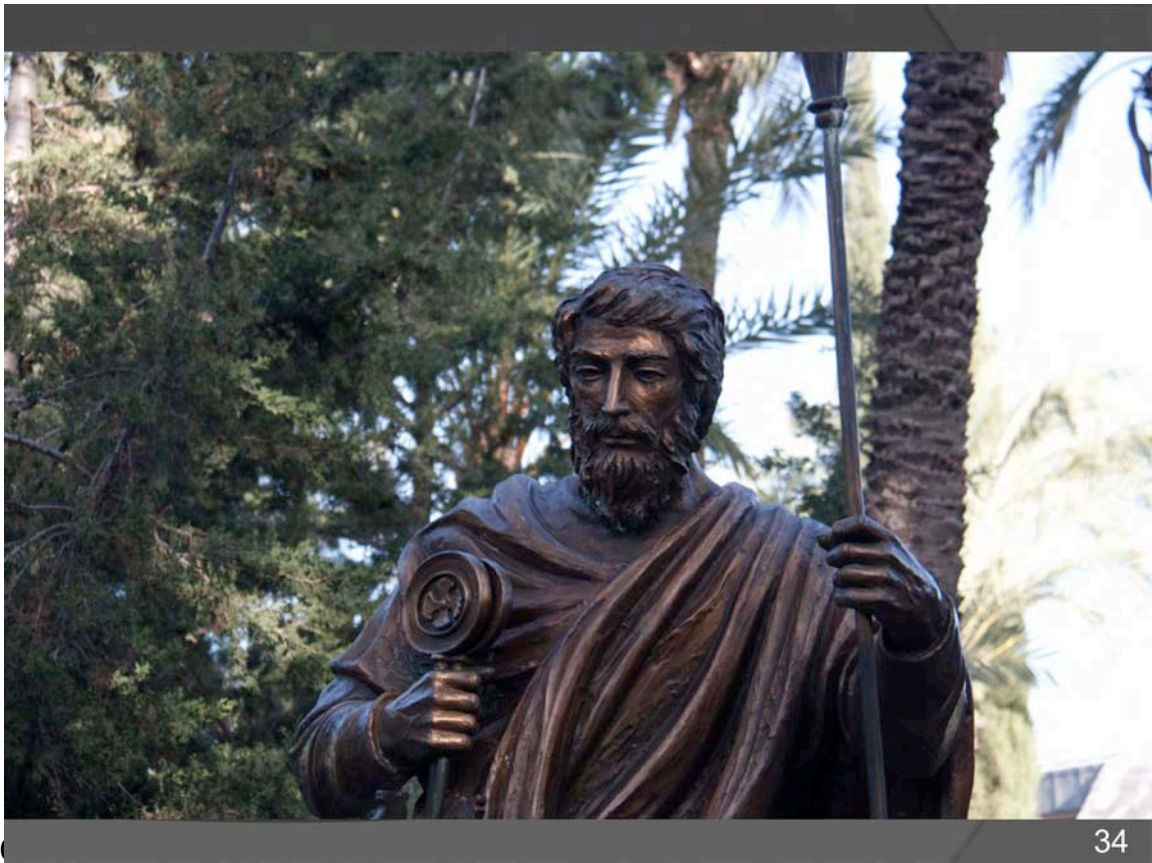


30

44While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. 46For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.



Then Peter said, 47"Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." 48So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.



Ultimately, he died a martyr's death together with Paul and all but one of the other disciples. An ignorant fisherman from an obscure village was chosen to become the first leader of the church that has continuously changed the world for 2000 years. My prayer is that Christ's presence in our lives, together with the servants he has placed around us, will also continually change us.

Amen!